

CARMEN PÉREZ-LLANTADA AURÍA*
Universidad de Zaragoza

Ana Bocanegra Valle, Lario de Oñate, M. C., López Torres, E., eds. 2007. *English for Specific Purposes: Studies for Classroom Development and Implementation*. Cádiz: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz. Pp: 262.

The process of internationalisation of Higher Education initiated by the Bologna process lays special emphasis on the prominent role of English as the instrumental lingua franca for academic and professional cross-cultural exchange (Seidlhofer 2005, Seidlhofer *et al.* 2006). On pedagogical grounds, Bologna's educational guidelines seek the promotion of lifelong learning and the learning of competences. Challenging –even, at times, problematising– language planning and language education policies (cf. Ferguson 2006), these guidelines foreground the need to adapt courses, programmes and curricula to students' specific academic or professional needs and to new teaching models. Adhering to these premises, various pedagogical trends are being witnessed: a marked emphasis on the correlation between the textual constructs of interaction and the discourse practices of academic and professional communities, a re-conceptualisation of teaching materials and methodologies in courses for students and professionals from different fields of specialisation, and a growing interest in raising both text and contextual awareness in the teaching/learning of specialised genres (cf. Bhatia 2004, Swales 2004).

Research grounded in these premises calls for closer introspection of the link between linguistic research and language pedagogy. A good example of this research is Ana Bocanegra Valle *et al.*'s *English for Specific Purposes. Studies for Classroom Development and Implementation*, a valuable and enriching source for reflecting on investigation derived from classroom observation and experimentation and, vice versa, on the development of classroom practices that arise from theoretical introspection. The editors have gathered a fruitful collection of research perspectives and teaching experiences which contest traditional models of ESP language teaching methods and propose innovative approaches to the use of English for business, scientific and technical communication. Based on an overall sociohistorically-oriented perspective of language for specialised purposes, the contributions explicitly or implicitly draw attention to the

textual products, the discourse processes, the participants and the communicative contexts in which specialised texts are produced and received (cf. Johns 2002).

The edition is organised into four different subject areas, which enables readers to contextualise each particular approach and gain valuable insights into all of them. Part I of the collection provides a view of ESP discourse as a particular variety of language use subject to very specific context-sensitive constraints. Part II, mainly targeted at descriptions for teaching/learning specialised vocabulary, represents a key section in the volume if we bear in mind that ESP is a highly informationally-dense register. In Part III, readers find useful proposals on curricular and methodological issues, with important implications for language education policies. The experimental research described in Part IV brings to the fore the growing importance of corpora and corpus software as a means of enhancing language learning processes. Along similar lines, Part V also provides readers with practical views concerning the implementation of new technologies in the ESP classroom with the purpose of enhancing learners' awareness of the social aspects of specialised discourses.

The first chapter of the collection, "A review of business English textbooks (1963-2006)" by M^a del Carmen Lario de Oñate conducts a diachronic study of the evolution of business English textbooks published between 1963 and 2006. The chapter offers interesting data about the increasing demand of business English courses, the evolution of formats and the internal organisation of the textbooks, the use of authentic materials, as well as methodological aspects related to the integration of language skills through classroom work. Taking a social standpoint, the author interestingly remarks how changes in world economy, cross-cultural communication and changes in the discourse practices of the professionals have involved dramatic changes in business English textbooks over the years.

Very much aware of cross-cultural variation in the international landscape, M^a Ángeles Orts Llopis explores the domain of legal English and the practices of the professionals in two cultural contexts. Although the chapter might fall short of an overt pedagogical orientation, it is nonetheless richly descriptive and illuminating as regards the comparison of the major rhetorical, discursual and textual differences between the legal tradition of the English-speaking world and the Spanish legal practices. She explains these differences as resulting from the epistemological traditions within which these two discourses are originated. The author seems to implicitly evoke the existence of different ethos, epistemologies and textographies (cf. Swales 1998) that affect the production and reception of legal texts. By this means, she succeeds in demonstrating the problematics of interpreting legal discourse across languages and cultures.

Opening up Part II of the volume, the chapter "Classification of vocabulary learning strategies in the context of ESP" by M^a Dolores Perea Barberá provides a thorough literature review of the most relevant categorisation frameworks for language learning strategies. The author discusses some overlapping subcategories of these strategies and shows partial disagreement with the revised taxonomies. Although there does not seem to be a clear-cut rationale behind her proposed tailor-suited taxonomy of ESP vocabulary

learning strategies, the author suggests very attractive lines for furthering research on ESP vocabulary within the classroom context. Worthy of note is the author's marked concern with ESP teachers' need to help learners acquire specialised terms in context.

Ana Bocanegra Valle's "On the teachability of nominal compounds to Spanish learners of English for Specific Purposes" covers a more particular –fresh and thoughtful– area of linguistic and pedagogical interest, namely, the role of compounds from the perspective of lexicogrammar patterns. The author shows preoccupation with Spanish learners' difficulties in perceiving the various structural realisations of these constructions as well as in understanding the semantic spaces of compounds in ESP discourse. By relying on concise experimental classroom research and apposite research statistical methods and procedures, the author provides sound evidence that the formation of English noun compounding benefits from instruction, and more precisely, from rich practice on comprehension, translation and paraphrasing. As the author rightly notes, further research on learners' actual production of these terms would be advisable in the future.

The chapter closing Part II of the volume, "Teaching English for nurses: vocabulary learning", by Manuel Botella Rodríguez, draws attention to vocabulary learning techniques in order to foster lexical competence in ESP. By intrinsically relating this piece of research to current labour opportunities for Spanish nursing students, the author prioritises word selection for vocabulary instruction as an essential component in English for nursing curriculum design. In doing so, he advocates the value of contextualisation, the usefulness of reading practice and the use of dictionaries as suitable types of incidental vocabulary learning. Relying on his own ESP teaching experience, the author also points out other resourceful strategies such as knowing the principles of word-formation and derivation. The most positive feature of the chapter is that the author draws on students' needs analysis to suggest several multi-level proficiency tasks and activities targeted at the acquisition of linguistic and sociolinguistic competences.

Initiating Part III, "Developing language descriptors to match the writing competence of engineering students" by Pilar Durán Escribano and Georgina Cuadrado Esclápez gears the volume's direction towards issues on ESP language planning and language education, and sensibly contextualises the significance of these issues by relating them to the pedagogical functions of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in Higher Education. As one of the first initiatives in Spain, the authors present an accurate account of the validation procedures followed to develop the writing descriptors in an Academic and Professional European Language Portfolio for engineering students at a tertiary level. The chapter shows enhanced sensitivity towards genre and sociorhetorical aspects of ESP discourse. It distils meticulous work in the process of categorising production strategies and language domains of the portfolio, and rigorously defines and calibrates the descriptors, language skills and objectives of the Academic and Professional Portfolio following the Common European Framework Reference Levels.

The following chapter, by Elena Bosch Abarca and Elvira M^a Montañés Brunet, "Some approaches for effective business writing", deals with ESP production skills and contributes to already consolidated genre-based approaches in ESP pedagogy. With a

decidedly sociorhetorical slant, the chapter expands on concepts such as the schematic structure of texts, metadiscourse features, and the linguistic resources conveying pragmatic politeness and modality. Pedagogically, Bosch et al.'s study deems it necessary to raise students' awareness of communicative intentions and of genres as social constructs negotiated by writers and readers. Although it should perhaps have covered updated, seminal literature on genre-based pedagogies, it succeeds in emphasising textualisation, discourse organisation and contextualisation aspects of the linguistic resources that ESP students should be exposed to in order to transmit propositional contents and engage with their participants effectively.

Sharing similar theoretical premises, Juan Carlos Palmer Silveira and Miguel Ruiz Garrido's chapter, "Annual reports in the English for business communication classroom: methodological perspectives" provides an insightful examination of the genre of the annual business report and sensibly conceives it as one of the central documents in the discourse practices of the business professionals. The authors show awareness of the clear-cut communicative purposes of this genre, and rightly regard it as a 'genre set'. They also succeed in stressing the importance of its metadiscourse features, the multimodal semiotics of these texts, and its rhetorical forcefulness. This satisfactory theoretical outline sets suitable grounds for interesting methodological suggestions for the teaching/learning of English for business.

"A corpus-based evaluation of non-native English graduate writing" by Alejandro Curado Fuentes deepens into corpora applications in the ESP classroom, an area of exploration which merits, as the author also notes, substantial research attention in current ESP research. Knowledgeable of the latest trends in experimental research, Curado reports on a case study which seeks to measure non-native English students' writing performance in an ESP doctorate course. Profiting from the combination of ESP research and corpus linguistics methodology, the author neatly describes the confounding variables for the construction of a specialised, genre-based corpus. By conducting a cross-linguistic comparison of academic written performance (in terms of genre features, lexicogrammar patterns, vocabulary semantics as well as summarising and synthesising skills) across the control group and the experimental group involved in the case study, Curado also provides evidence that the use of corpus-based materials in the ESP classroom can enhance academic written performance.

In "Specialised corpora and corpus-aided learning: an approach to maritime legislation", Elena López Torres points out the advantages of using corpora for instructing ESP students. The author contends that a corpus-based instruction in which students have direct use of frequency lists and concordance lines allows close examination of contextualised lexicogrammar and favours inductive learning. Like Curado's contribution, the author insists on the necessary integration of grammar and vocabulary in ESP learning. She further stresses the advantages of using contextualised instances of authentic uses of the language as a suitable input to develop students' knowledge of lexicogrammar within a context of use. Her classroom observations, which should be corroborated by statistical procedures on students' linguistic output in

this corpus-aided learning experience, may stand as a helpful reference source for approaching a data-driven learning in the ESP classroom.

The following chapter, “Using the Internet as a huge language learning resource tool”, by Alejandro F. López de Vergara Méndez, represents a comprehensive view of how ESP teaching/learning can profit from the advantages of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), as the latter allow contextualisation of specialised language uses in different socio-cultural settings. The author convincingly argues that accessing electronic resources is also an excellent pedagogical tool to develop learner autonomy since it facilitates both in-site and off-site learning. The chapter offers a detailed description of methods, materials and classroom procedures in this experience. This innovative proposal, very much in tune with the lifelong learning guidelines promoted by the European Space in Higher Education, represents a helpful resource on how to adapt and use the ICTs in the ESP classroom.

In the last chapter of the collection, “English for the field of social work: content and design of a CD-ROM”, Cándida Fernández Morales and Elaine Hewitt present an innovative approach to ESP learning through specialised multimedia material. Together with technical details on the programming and options design of the CD-ROM, the authors provide detailed account of its intended learning objectives and outcomes, the distribution of contents in thematic units, as well as the grammar, vocabulary, discourse-related tasks and interactive exercises. Their proposal certainly represents a valuable attempt to encourage consolidation of classroom work outside the class, and a suitable means of fostering motivation and autonomous learning processes.

The value of this volume for ESP researchers and teachers is considerable. It includes inspiring and thought-provoking research proposals, and it is filled with useful pedagogical suggestions and implications for classroom-based research and classroom practice. The contributors put special attention to context-sensitive linguistic features of ESP discourse and, by incorporating solid discussion on current work in ESP research and language education, they offer a neat understanding of how real language works across specialised professional contexts.

NOTES

- * Correspondence to: Carmen Pérez-Llantada Auría. University of Zaragoza. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. c/ Pedro Cerbuna 12. 50009 ZARAGOZA. E-mail: llantada@unizar.es

REFERENCE

- Bhatia, V. 2004. *Worlds of Written Discourse*. London, New York: Continuum.
 Ferguson, G. 2006. *Language Planning and Education*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Johns, A. M. 2002. *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Seidlhofer, B. 2005. "English as a lingua franca". *ELT Journal* 59 (4). 339-341.
- Seidlhofer, B., Breiteneder, A. y Pitzl, M.-L. 2006. "English as a lingua franca in Europe: challenges for applied linguistics". *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 26. 3-34.
- Swales, J. M. 1998. *Other Floors, Other Voices: A Textography of a Small University Building*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Swales, J. M. 2004. *Research Genres. Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.